



Library of the Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by President Patton.

Division

SCC

Section

2430

REPORT.

THE Committee appointed by the Presbytery of New York, at its meeting on April 13, 1891, to consider the "Inaugural Address" of Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D.D., in its relation to the Confession of Faith, would respectfully report as follows:

The Committee was appointed in pursuance of the following action of Presbytery:

"WHEREAS, The address of the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D.D., a member of this Presbytery, delivered on Monday evening, January 20, 1891, on the occasion of his inauguration as the 'incumbent of the Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology' in the Union Theological Seminary (which address has since been published by said Seminary), has been very generally criticised as containing statements which are seemingly contrary to the teaching and spirit of our Confession of Faith; and

WHEREAS, This address has also been actually made the occasion of complaint to the General Assembly by at least four Presbyteries; therefore,

Resolved, That a committee consisting of seven persons be appointed, to which the said address shall be referred for careful consideration, with instructions to report at the meeting in May what action, if any, be appropriate in relation thereto."

The Committee regrets to report the resignation of Rev. Henry Vandyke, D.D.

In obedience to the resolution of appointment by which the investigation was to be limited to an inquiry whether or not any portion of the "inaugural address" delivered by Professor Charles A. Briggs, D.D., on January 20, 1891, is in conflict with the Confession of Faith, your Committee has made diligent comparison of the Confession and the address. After making due allowance for all reasonable latitude of interpretation it is believed that the address conflicts with the Confession in the portions herein indicated.

I.

In the portion entitled "*The Sources of Divine Authority*," extending from the bottom of page 24, to the middle of page 28,

the Church, the Reason, and the Bible seem to be regarded as co-ordinate "fountains" of Divine Authority. Thus:

(a) Page 24, last sentence: "There are historically three great fountains of divine authority—the Bible, the Church, and the Reason."

(b) Page 25, lines 1-14 inclusive:

"(1) *The Authority of the Church*. The majority of Christians, from the apostolic age, have found God through the Church. Martyrs and saints, fathers and schoolmen, the profoundest intellects, the saintliest lives, have had this experience. Institutional Christianity has been to them the presence chamber of God. They have therein and thereby entered into communion with all saints. It is difficult for many Protestants to regard this experience as any other than pious illusion and delusion. But what shall we say of a modern like Newman, who could not reach certainty, striving never so hard, through the Bible or the Reason, but who did find divine authority in the institutions of the Church? Shall we deny it because it may be beyond our experience?"

(c) Page 27, lines 9-21 inclusive: "Martineau could not find divine authority in the Church or the Bible, but he did find God enthroned in his own soul. There are those who would refuse these Rationalists a place in the company of the faithful, but they forget that the essential thing is to find God and divine certainty, and if these men have found God without the mediation of Church and Bible, Church and Bible are means and not ends; they are avenues to God but are not God. We regret that these Rationalists depreciate the means of grace so essential to most of us, but we are warned lest we commit a similar error, and depreciate the Reason and the Christian consciousness."

(d) Page 28, lines 1-18 inclusive: "(3) *The Authority of Holy Scripture*.—We have examined the Church and the Reason as seats of divine authority in an introduction to our theme, the *Authority of the Scriptures*, because they open our eyes to see mistakes that are common to the three departments. Protestant Christianity builds its faith and life on the divine authority contained in the Scriptures, and too often depreciates the Church and the Reason. Spurgeon is an example of the average modern Evangelical who holds the Protestant position and assails the

Church and Reason in the interest of the authority of Scripture. But the average opinion of the Christian world would not assign him a higher place in the kingdom of God than Martineau or Newman. May we not conclude, on the whole, that these three representative Christians of our time, living in or near the world's metropolis, have each in his way found God and rested on divine authority?"

These paragraphs, in the judgment of the Committee, cannot be reconciled with the Confession, Chapter I, Section 1, which says: "Although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God as to leave men inexcusable, *yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of His will which is necessary unto salvation.* Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times and in divers manners, to reveal Himself and to declare that His will unto His Church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing, *which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary*; those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased."

Also with Section VI (first paragraph) of the same chapter, which says: "*The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture*; unto which nothing at any time is to be added whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men."

Also with Section X of Chapter I, which says: "*The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.*"

II.

The portion entitled "Inerrancy," beginning with the last paragraph on page 34, and continuing to end of first paragraph on page 36, contains the following statements:

Page 35, lines 4-16 inclusive : "I shall venture to affirm that, so far as I can see, there are errors in the Scriptures that no one has been able explain away ; and the theory that they were not in the original text is sheer assumption upon which no mind can rest with certainty. If such errors destroy the authority of the Bible it is already destroyed for historians. Men cannot shut their eyes to truth and fact. But on what authority do these theologians drive men from the Bible by this theory of inerrancy ? The Bible itself nowhere makes this claim. The creeds of the Church nowhere sanction it. It is a ghost of modern evangelicalism to frighten children."

The denial of inerrancy in the original text is regarded by your Committee as conflicting irreconcilably with the Confession, Chapter I, Section I, which says: "Therefore it pleased the Lord * * * to commit the same wholly unto writing." * * * Also with Section II of the same chapter, which says: "Under the name of Holy Scripture, *or the word of God written*, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testament, which are these." (Here follows the complete list of books of the Old and the New Testament.)

Respecting these books Section II says: "*All which are given by inspiration of God* to be the rule of faith and lite."

Also with Section IV of the same chapter, which says: "*The authority of the Holy Scripture*, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or Church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), *the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.*"

Also with Section V of the same, which says: "We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem for the Holy Scripture ; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), *the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation*, the many other incomparable excellencies, *and the entire perfection thereof* are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God ; yet notwithstanding *our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof*, is from the inward

work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts."

Also with Section VIII of the same chapter, which says :

"The Old Testament in Hebrew, (which was the native language of the people of God of old) and the New Testament in Greek, (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), *being immediately inspired by God*, and by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are *therefore authentical*; so as in all controversies of religion the Church is finally to appeal unto them."

As well as with Section X of the same chapter :

"The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, *can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.*"

III.

The portion under redemption marked (c) beginning with the last paragraph on page 53, and continuing to the close of the first paragraph on page 55, contains the following statement :

(a) Page 53, last three lines, and page 54, lines 1-6 inclusive : "Another fault of Protestant theology is in its limitation of the process of redemption to this world and its neglect of those vast periods of time which have elapsed for most men in the Middle State between death and the resurrection. The Roman Catholic Church is firmer here, though it smears the biblical doctrine with not a few hurtful errors. The reaction against this limitation as seen in the theory of second probation is not surprising."

(b) Page 54, lines 12-14 inclusive : "There is no authority in the Scriptures or in the creeds of Christendom, for the doctrine of immediate sanctification at death."

(c) Page 54, lines 14-31 inclusive, and page 55, lines 1-6 inclusive : "The only sanctification known to experience, to Christian orthodoxy and to the Bible, is progressive sanctification. Progressive sanctification after death is the doctrine of the Bible and the Church ; and it is of vast importance in our times that we should understand it and live in accordance with it. The bugbear of a judgment immediately after death and

the illusion of a magical transformation in the dying hour should be banished from the world. They are conceits derived from the Ethnic religions, and without basis in the Bible or Christian experience as expressed in the symbols of the Church. The former makes death a terror to the best of men, the latter makes human life and experience of no effect ; and both cut the nerves of Christian activity and striving after sanctification. Renouncing them as hurtful unchristian errors we look with hope and joy for the continuation of the processes of grace and the wonders of redemption in the company of the blessed, to which the faithful are all hastening ; and through these blessed hopes we enter into the communion of all saints and have a happy consciousness of the one holy catholic Church, whose center and majestic frame are chiefly in the skies, the one body of the one Christ."

Your Committee regard the statements made in these quotations as irreconcilable with the Confession, Chapter XXXII, Section I, which says: "The bodies of men after death return to dust and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. *The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies ; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness reserved to the judgment of the great day.* Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies the Scripture acknowledgeth none."

Also with Chapter XIII, Section II, which says : "This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect *in this life*; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh."

The Committee therefore recommends that the Presbytery enter at once upon the judicial investigation of the case.

G. W. F. BIRCH,
J. F. FORBES,
J. J. LAMPE,
J. J. STEVENSON

APPENDIX.

Exhibit I.—CONFESSION.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation; therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.

X. *The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.*

Exhibit I.—ADDRESS.

Pages 24-28.

I.—THE SOURCES OF DIVINE AUTHORITY.

It is the testimony of human experience in all ages that God manifests Himself to men and gives certainty of His presence and authority. There are historically three great fountains of divine authority—the Bible, the Church, and the Reason.

(1.) *The Authority of the Church.*—The majority of Christians from the apostolic age have found God through the Church. Martyrs and saints, fathers and schoolmen, the profoundest intellects, the saintliest lives, have had this experience. Institutional Christianity has been to them the presence-chamber of God. They have therein and thereby entered into communion with all saints. It is difficult for many Protestants to regard this experience as any other than pious illusion and delusion. But what shall we say of a modern like Newman, who could not reach certainty, striving never so hard, through the Bible or the Reason, but who did find divine authority in the institutions of the Church? Shall we deny it because it may be beyond our experience? If we have not seen God in institutional Christianity, it is because the Church and its institutions have so enveloped themselves to us with human conceits and follies. Divine authority has been so encased in the authority of popes and councils, prelates and

priests, ecclesiastics and theologians, that multitudes have been unable to discern it; and these mediators of redemption have so obtruded themselves in the way of devout seekers after God that they could not find God. Plain, common people have not been offended so much by this state of things, because they are accustomed in all denominations to identify the authority of God with the authority of priest and pastor, as a child identifies the authority of the parent with the authority of God; and men of deep spiritual insight may be able to force their way through these obstructions, and find God in spite of them. But to men of the temperament and environment of the average educated Protestant such an experience is difficult, if not impossible. Nevertheless, the Church is a seat of divine authority, and the multitudes of pious souls in the present and the past have not been mistaken in their experience when they have found God in the Church.

(2.) *The Authority of the Reason.*—Another means used by God to make Himself known is the forms of the Reason, using Reason in a broad sense to embrace the metaphysical categories, the conscience and the religious feeling. Here, in the Holy of Holies of human nature, God presents Himself to those who seek Him. The vast multitude of men are guided by God through the forms of the Reason, without their having any consciousness of His presence or guidance. There are few who are able to rise by reflection into the higher consciousness of God. These few are of the mystic type of religion; the men

who have been the prophets of mankind, the founders of religions, the leaders of Revivals and Reformations, who, conscious of the divine presence within them, and certain of His guidance, lead on confidently in the paths of divine Providence. Such men have appeared in all ages of the world. Some of them have been the leaders of thought in modern times in Great Britain, Germany, and America. We ought not to be surprised that they should depreciate the Bible and the Church as merely external modes of finding God, for even the prophets of the Bible attach little importance to the institutions of Israel, and seldom mention them, except to warn against their misuse.

It may be that these modern thinkers have a divine calling to withdraw men from mere priestcraft, ceremonialism, dead orthodoxy and ecclesiasticism, and concentrate their attention on the essentials of the Christian religion.

Martineau could not find divine authority in the Church or the Bible, but he did find God enthroned in his own soul. There are those who would refuse these Rationalists a place in the company of the faithful. But they forget that the essential thing is to find God and divine certainty, and if these men have found God without the mediation of Church and Bible, Church and Bible are means and not ends; they are avenues to God, but are not God. We regret that these Rationalists depreciate the means of grace so essential to most of us, but we are warned lest we commit a similar error, and depreciate the Reason and the Christian consciousness.

(3.) *The Authority of Holy Scripture.*—We have examined the Church and the Reason as seats of divine authority in an introduction to our theme, the Authority of the Scriptures, because they open our eyes to see mistakes that are common to the three departments. Protestant Christianity builds its faith and life on the divine authority contained in the Scriptures, and too often depreciates the Church and the Reason. Spurgeon is an example of the average modern Evangelical, who holds the Protestant position, and assails the Church and Reason in the interest of the authority of Scripture. But the average opinion of the Christian world would not assign him a higher place in the kingdom of God than Martineau or Newman. May we not conclude, on the whole, that these three representative Christians of our time, living in or near the world's metropolis, have, each in his way, found God and rested on divine authority?

Exhibit II.—CONFESSION.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation; *therefore it pleased the Lord*, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto his church; and

Exhibit II.—ADDRESS.

Pages 34-36.

(4.) *Inerrancy.*—The fourth barrier set up by theologians to keep men away from the Bible is the dogma of inerrancy of Scripture. This barrier confronts Historical Criticism. It is not a pleasant task to point out errors in the sacred Scriptures. Nevertheless Historical Criticism finds them, and we must meet the issue whether they destroy the authority of the Bible or not. It has been taught in recent years, and is still taught by some theologians, that one proved error

afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.

II. Under the name of *Holy Scripture*, or the word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testament, which are these :

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Genesis. | Ecclesiastes. |
| Exodus. | The Song of Songs. |
| Leviticus. | Isaiah. |
| Numbers. | Jeremiah. |
| Deuteronomy. | Lamentations. |
| Joshua. | Ezekiel. |
| Judges. | Daniel. |
| Ruth. | Hosea. |
| Samuel, I. | Joel. |
| Samuel, II. | Amos. |
| Kings, I. | Obadiah. |
| Kings, II. | Jonah. |
| Chronicles, I. | Micah. |
| Chronicles, II. | Nahum. |
| Ezra. | Habakkuk. |
| Nehemiah. | Zephaniah. |
| Esther. | Haggai. |
| Job. | Zechariah. |
| Psalms. | Malachi. |
| Proverbs. | |

OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| The Gospels according to Matthew. | Thessalonians, II. |
| Mark. | To Timothy, I. |
| Luke. | To Timothy, II. |
| John. | To Titus. |
| The Acts of the Apostles. | To Philemon. |
| Paul's Epistles to the Romans. | The Epistle to the Hebrews. |
| Corinthians, I. | The Epistle of James. |
| Corinthians, II. | The first, and second Epistles of Peter. |
| Galatians. | The first, second and third Epistles of John. |
| Ephesians. | |

destroys the authority of Scripture.

I shall venture to affirm that, so far as I can see, there are errors in the Scriptures that no one has been able to explain away; and the theory that they were not in the original text is sheer assumption, upon which no mind can rest with certainty. If such errors destroy the authority of the Bible, it is already destroyed for historians. Men cannot shut their eyes to truth and fact. But on what authority do these theologians drive men from the Bible by this theory of inerrancy? The Bible itself nowhere makes this claim. The creeds of the Church nowhere sanction it. It is a ghost of modern evangelicalism to frighten children. The Bible has maintained its authority with the best scholars of our time, who with open minds have been willing to recognize any error that might be pointed out by Historical Criticism; for these errors are all in the circumstantial and not in the essentials; they are in the human setting, not in the precious jewel itself; they are found in that section of the Bible that theologians commonly account for from the providential superintendence of the mind of the author, as distinguished from divine revelation itself. It may be that this providential superintendence gives infallible guidance in every particular; and it may be that it differs but little, if at all, from the providential superintendence of the fathers and schoolmen and theologians of the Christian Church. It is not important for our purpose that we should decide this question. If we should abandon the whole field of providential superintendence so far as inspiration and divine

Philippians.
Colossians.
Thessalonians, I.

The Epistle of Jude.
The Revelation.

All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.

III. The books commonly called Apocrypha, *not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture*; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.

IV. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, *but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof*; and therefore it is to be received, *because it is the word of God*.

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church to an high and reverent esteem for the Holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, *and the entire perfection thereof*, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be *the word of God*; yet, notwithstanding, *our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof*, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.

VI. *The whole counsel of God*, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith,

authority are concerned, and limit divine inspiration and authority to the essential contents of the Bible, to its religion, faith, and morals, we would still have ample room to seek divine authority where alone it is essential, or even important, in the teaching that guides our devotions, our thinking, and our conduct.

and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture : unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word ; and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.

VII. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all ; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

VIII. *The Old Testament in Hebrew*, (which was the native language of the people of God of old,) and *the New Testament in Greek*, (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations,) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, *are therefore authentical ; so as in all controversies of religion the church is finally to appeal unto them.* But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God who have right unto, and inter-

est in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner, and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.

IX. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture, is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it may be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

X. The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

Exhibit III.—CONFESSION.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF SANCTIFICATION.

They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by His word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and

Exhibit III.—ADDRESS.

Pages 53-55.

(c.) *Another fault of Protestant theology is in its limitation of the process of redemption to this world, and its neglect of those vast periods of time which have elapsed for most men in the Middle State between death and the resurrection. The Roman Catholic Church is firmer here, though it smears the Biblical doctrine with not a few hurtful errors. The reaction against this limitation, as seen in the theory of second probation, is not surprising. I do not find this doctrine*

they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

II. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, *yet imperfect in this life* : there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

III. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome : and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OF THE STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH,
AND OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE
DEAD.

The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption ; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies : and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

11. At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be

in the Bible, but I do find in the Bible the doctrine of a Middle State of conscious higher life in the communion with Christ and the multitude of the departed of all ages, and of the necessity of entire sanctification, in order that the work of redemption may be completed. *There is no authority in the Scriptures, or in the creeds of Christendom, for the doctrine of immediate sanctification at death. The only sanctification known to experience, to Christian orthodoxy, and to the Bible, is progressive sanctification. Progressive sanctification after death, is the doctrine of the Bible and the Church ; and it is of vast importance in our times that we should understand it, and live in accordance with it. The hugbear of a judgment immediately after death, and the illusion of a magical transformation in the dying hour should be banished from the world. They are conceits derived from the Ethnic religions, and without basis in the Bible or Christian experience as expressed in the symbols of the Church. The former makes death a terror to the best of men, the latter makes human life and experience of no effect ; and both cut the nerves of Christian activity and striving after sanctification. Renouncing them as hurtful, unchristian errors, we look with hope and joy for the continuation of the processes of grace, and the wonders of redemption in the company of the blessed, to which the faithful are all hastening ; and through these blessed hopes we enter into the communion of all saints, and have a happy consciousness of the one holy catholic Church, whose center and majestic frame are chiefly in the skies, the one body of the one Christ.*

The salvation of the world can only

changed : and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever.

III. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor ; the bodies of the just, by His Spirit, unto honor, and be made conformable to His own glorious body.

mean the world as a whole, compared with which the unredeemed will be so few and insignificant, and evidently beyond the reach of redemption by their own act of rejecting it and hardening themselves against it, and by descending into such depths of demoniacal depravity in the Middle State, that they will vanish from the sight of the redeemed as altogether and irredeemably evil, and never more disturb the harmonies of the saints.



